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A

CHARGE

DELIVERED TO THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF OXFORD

BY

RICHARD BAGOT, D.D.

BISHOP OF OXFORD,

AND CHANCELLOR OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER;

AT HIS

THIRD VISITATION,

JULY AND AUGUST, 1838.

SECOND EDITION.

OXFORD,

J. H. PARKER:

J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

1838.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.

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TO

THE REVEREND THE CLERGY

OF THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD,

THIS CHARGE

MADE PUBLIC IN COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR REQUEST,

IS

AFFECTIONATELY AND RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL BROTHER AND SERVANT,

R. OXFORD.

Cuddesden Palace,
September, 1838.

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MY REVERENDBRETHREN,

In ordinary times, the whole object of a Visitation will be centered in things spiritual, and all references to temporal matters (however interesting to the world without) will hold an inferior and most subordinate place.

I must not stop to dwell on and deplore a state of affairs, which now for some years past has compelled the Bishops and Clergy, at the periods of their more solemn meetings, to meet as men so leagued against, and so systematically depressed and maligned, as to render it necessary that their consultations should partake, for the most part, of a secular character: and this, not because they are unwilling to submit to trouble, to worldly loss, and (if need be) to shame and pain for Christ's sake; but because they know, that for the time being they are trustees for the rights of the Church, and that (so far as in them lies) they are bound to transmit unimpaired to their successors, those privileges, of which, as members of an Establishment, they are themselves partakers.

Gladly indeed would I forget, whilst thus mingled with my Clergy, the strife of parties, the struggles

of rival interests, and confusions of the world without, confining my views to things spiritual, and speaking *only* of our respective Ministerial duties; I feel, however, that on the present occasion my observations must not be so restricted. The external circumstances of the Church continue to demand a special notice; it is due to *you*, and it will be expected of *me*, that at least I should treat briefly of them, though (God is witness) I see such abundant warnings on every side, of the fleeting nature of all earthly things, as make me earnestly desire to turn from the contemplation of them, to the words and promises of Him, who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

I. §. 1. I am visiting an altered Diocese:—altered in every way! In that portion of it, which, for the last nine years, has been committed to my trust, how many of our fellow-labourers have been in that time removed from the scenes of their ministry! How many, whom we have loved and venerated as faithful husbandmen in the vineyard of the Lord, are entered into their rest! How many of us who are left, read, if not in our own increasing infirmities, yet in the sight of new successors to old friends, the salutary warning, that *our* generation is rapidly passing away; that "the time is short," and the "night cometh when no man can work!"

§. 2. But the Diocese itself, as well as the labourers within it, is changed. The See of Oxford has, by the addition of Berkshire, been already doubled

in extent[a]; and, as matters now stand, the County of Buckingham, with a population of 150,000 souls, is destined to be added to the labours and responsibilities of the next Bishop of Oxford.

I conceive it due both to myself and you to say a few words on the subject of this change, and of the means by which it has been brought about.

In the appointment of the Board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, we have witnessed the creation of a power as irresponsible as it is gigantic,—an "imperium in imperio," which, before long, must supersede all other authority in the Church, and whose decrees are issued in such a manner, as to render expostulation and remonstrance unavailing. With a sincere belief in the pure and conscientious motives of every member of the Board, *as individuals*, their acts, as a *corporation*, seem to me to be every way full of peril to the Church, of which they ought to be the protectors.

And as one of the spiritual guardians of that Church, (though unworthy,) I take this solemn occasion of recording my protest against both the Commission, and its proceedings.

I disapprove the Commission, as utterly unconstitutional in its *permanency*, in the *extent* of its *powers*, and in the obstacles which it throws in the

[a] Census, 1831.

	Population.	Parishes.
Oxfordshire . . .	152,156	217.
Berks	145,389	154.
Bucks	146,529	202.

way of fair and open discussion,—in the limited selection of its Clerical members, taken from one rank of the Ministry only,—in the exclusion of four-fifths of the Bishops from all participation in the consultation on Church measures—(for, their several *Diocesans* were the channels, through which, hitherto, every Clergyman, however humble in station, was enabled to offer his opinion, and claim for it its due weight and consideration:) and, lastly, I disapprove this Commission, as being under the controlling influence of the Government for the time being, and therefore not altogether likely to remain unbiassed by the force of political claims and predilections.

Nor, with reference to the actual proceedings of the Commission, do I find myself able to speak more favourably: "In Reforms," observes South, (and the thirst for innovation was not, alas! the only point of resemblance between his times and ours,) "in Reforms, the Church should look about "her, and consider again and again, what she is to "change *from*, and what she must change *to*, and "*where she shall make an end of changing*, before "she quits her present constitution." I heartily wish that this latter sentiment had been far more in the thoughts of the Commissioners than I fear it has: it would have saved the Church a heavy blow, and *them* the heavy judgment which posterity will assuredly pass upon them.

Having, as a member of the Chapter of Canter-

bury, united in the several addresses of that body to Her Majesty, to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and to the several Deans and Chapters in England and Wales; and as I believe that these addresses are in the hands of the public; it is not necessary that I should trouble you with any further statement of my apprehensions with reference to the contemplated spoliation of Cathedral Establishments, than to reiterate my settled conviction, that while those edifices themselves, many of them the beauty and the glory of the country, must eventually fall to ruin and decay through the inadequacy of the funds now left to support the necessary expenditure of repairs, the Established Church generally, will receive no proportionate benefits from the alienation of Cathedral property.

With regard to the alteration and re-arrangement of Dioceses, I shall be thankful to learn, that the ends desired have been obtained. The opinion expressed by more than one Prelate has been, that "hereafter, when all present interests have ceased, "many of the alterations will be condemned by all "judicious supporters of our religious Establish-"ment."

For myself, (however little the sentiment may be in accordance with the feelings of the day,) I candidly confess, that while the rapid increase of our population seems an admirable reason, why, as in the case of Ripon, fresh Dioceses should be created, wherever the spiritual necessities of the

country demand it, it does not appear to me a sufficient excuse for the extensive disruption of so many ancient ties, as will be the result of the impending changes.

My belief is, that at this very day, the scheme proposed by Cranmer to Henry VIII. in 1539, (which is given at length by Burnet, in his third book[b],) would have been far more available and practically useful than that which is to be adopted. In the earlier plan, Oxfordshire and Berkshire form one compact Diocese; while Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, the latter of which is as inconveniently situated with reference to Ely[c], as the former will be to Oxford, were destined to be united in another.

[b] The additional Sees which Henry the Eighth was inclined to found, (but of which only three were called into actual existence,) were,

1.	Essex, to be endowed from the spoils of	Waltham Abbey.
2.	Hertford, ...	St. Alban's.
3.	Beds and Bucks, ...	Dunstable.
4.	Oxford and Berks, ...	Thame and Osney.
5.	Northampton and Huntingdon, .	Peterborough.
6.	Middlesex, ...	Westminster.
7.	Leicester and Rutland, . . .	Leicester.
8.	Gloucester, ...	St. Peter's.
9.	Lancashire, ...	Fountain's.
10.	Suffolk, ...	Bury St. Edmund's.
11.	Stafford and Salop, ...	Shrewsbury.
12.	Notts and Derby, ...	Welbeck.
13.	Cornwall, ...	Launceston.

[c] Vide the Bp. of Ely's complaints on the subject: Charge, p. 7.

§. 4. My own share in the transactions which have recently affected the See of Oxford, may be told in few words. I have endeavoured, according to my oath, to defend the interests of the Bishopric: have laid before the Commissioners the best judgment I could form on the subject: have remonstrated and expostulated, where I conscientiously differed from them; and if I have yielded at length to a scheme which I disapprove, and have undertaken the superintendence of Berkshire, while I have declined that of Buckinghamshire, as being utterly beyond my powers, it has been from a determination not to allow personal considerations to weigh with me, and from an unwillingness to thwart, by resistance which could not be ultimately effectual, the suggestions of the Commissioners: since I was led to believe, that the immediate union of Bristol with Gloucester, and even the formation of the Diocese of Ripon, would depend on the arrangements which should be made with respect to this See.

The die is now cast: and while as Christians we beseech Him, who is continually bringing good out of apparent evil, to dispose the course of events for the welfare and stability of His Church, we must, as good subjects and citizens, consider how we may best and most effectually carry out the intentions of the Legislature.

In receiving Berkshire, therefore, as a constituent part of the See of Oxford, my desire has been, and

is, that the union and amalgamation should be complete; and that the same system should prevail throughout the whole Diocese. [[d] It has been in pursuance of this object, that I have put the Rural Deaneries of Berkshire upon the same footing as those of Oxfordshire. I felt, indeed, an extreme unwillingness to alter arrangements which had been made by the late venerable and excellent Bishop of Salisbury; a Prelate who had so long presided over this portion of my present Diocese, and who was so deservedly beloved by all his Clergy. But, under the strong conviction, that uniformity of operation is now the great point to be established, I have not hesitated to put the whole Diocese upon the same footing; the hope and belief, that the interests of the See will be thus best consulted, that the evils of changing a system which had hitherto worked so well, will be felt for a time only, and that in the kind co-operation of your respected Archdeacon, and the rest of the Clergy, I shall find my most effectual external support, under the burthen of my increased responsibilities.]

Before I dismiss this branch of the subject, let me avail myself of this opportunity to state, that my not visiting my Diocese last year arose principally from the defect of the Act of Parliament, which suspended for one year the functions of the Chancellor and Registrar, which are so essentially connected and interwoven with the effectual dis-

[d] This paragraph was omitted in Oxfordshire.

charge of the Visitatorial duties. This defect was partially remedied by the Act of the last Session, which gave to the Bishop the full exercise of all the jurisdiction which custom had established in this Diocese during the Visitation: but we still have to wait for the entire adjustment of this and other complicated questions, owing to the measure, which the Government had undertaken to introduce on this subject, having been so long postponed.

II. §. 1. I must now proceed to notice some particular measures affecting the Church, which have lately been proposed in Parliament. I shall, however, be enabled to do this the more briefly, as on several of the subjects, (particularly those of Pluralities and Non-Residence,) I have already spoken at length in former Charges; and I am convinced that you will do me the justice to believe, that while I am resolved to offer an uncompromising resistance to every measure on Ecclesiastical subjects, which appears to be grounded on motives of worldly expediency,—the mere love of change, or on other still more questionable principles,—I am one who desire to tolerate no abuse, merely because it has been long established, but, on the contrary, will always support such salutary reforms as I believe to be conducive to the promotion of God's glory, and the welfare of the people.

Not among salutary reforms, however, is to be classed that monstrous suggestion, by which it has been proposed to enforce a National system of

Education, independent of all spiritual instruction, and from all interference with which the Clergy of the country are to be excluded.

For this system, which has been truly and happily designated, as "a plan for teaching morality without religion, and religion without a creed," I feel that no condemnation which I can pass on it can be too strong; no opposition which you can offer to it can be too determined. Little can they, who have devised such a plan, know of the habits and feelings of their fellow-countrymen, if they suppose that the adoption of such a system would be acceptable, or even tolerable, to *them*; but least of all can they know of the real character of the human heart, who can think it statesmanlike, or wise, or expedient, (I say nothing of higher motives,) to leave the youth of this country without the safeguard of Christian principles, or who can argue themselves into the belief, that men will be better subjects and better citizens, for having been left with no stronger protection against the torrent of passions and appetites, at the age *when both are strongest*, than a little crude, superficial knowledge of literature and science.

I think our system of National Education capable of great and essential improvements: I think it far behind what it ought to be,—behind what it is in other countries: I see no objection—on the contrary, I see many advantages—in extending the branches of knowledge conveyed in our Parochial Schools:

and if the prevailing taste of the day be for the rudiments of scientific knowledge, I see no reason why the cultivation of it may not be encouraged among the lower classes: it is harmless, not altogether useless, and may be the solace of hours which otherwise would be spent in idleness, or evil company.

I shall be glad, therefore, my Reverend Brethren, to find that you are exerting yourselves on every side to render the National system of Education as perfect as you can; extending the range of instruction, affording your valuable assistance and suggestions wherever they may be needed; but specially watching with the most jealous vigilance, lest the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord be posthabited to that "wisdom which "is from without;" lest, that one thing needful be omitted in the education of our people, which alone is able to support them in all dangers, and carry them through all temptations; lest, instead of being "rooted and built up in Christ, and stablished in "the faith," the rising generation should, through our fault, be "spoilt through philosophy and vain "deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudi-"ments of the world, and not after Christ[g]."

I am glad to observe, that out of the returns which I have received from more than 300 parishes, there appear to be Daily schools established in the vast majority; that there are Sunday schools in almost

[g] Coloss. ii. 7, 8.

all; and that, in point of fact, I can detect but ten parishes in the whole Diocese in which there are no schools whatever, and these are parishes of such a limited population, as to make the want rather nominal than real: still, we must not rest satisfied while *any* improvement can be made. Meanwhile I trust, that no further attempts will be made to establish a system of National Education on a basis not grounded on Religion. If, however, the scheme should be persisted in, you will agree with me, that we must organize forthwith the most strenuous opposition to it, and from every rank in society, and every corner of the land, heap petition on petition, and remonstrance on remonstrance, till so fatal a measure be withdrawn.

§. 2. The Registration and Marriage Acts have now been a year upon trial: and as even they who were originally the most strenuous supporters of these measures are now complaining of their inconveniences and insufficiency, I trust we shall soon see them altered, and made available for purposes of practical good. In a religious point of view, their effects are deeply to be deplored. The degradation of the holy rite of Matrimony, from a religious to a mere civil contract; and the tendency which the other Act has to lower the value of the Sacrament of Baptism in general estimation and respect, are subjects which we trust will not be overlooked, if an opportunity shall again be afforded of bringing them under the deliberate consideration of Parliament.

Meanwhile I am not without apprehension, that we ourselves are culpable upon one point, and may be reaping the harvest of past neglect. Why should the Sacrament of Baptism be made less a *public* ordinance than that of the Lord's Supper? Why should it be administered otherwise than as the Rubric directs? I am happy to observe, by the answers to my enquiries, that in at least half the parishes of this Diocese, Baptisms take place after the second Lesson. I beg you to consider, whether the plan cannot be generally re-established; whether, at least on certain Sundays in the year, if not on all, Baptism may not be restored to its ancient honour and solemnity.

I trust that you continue to fill up the Parish Registers, as you did previous to the passing of the Bills of which I have been speaking.

§. 3. I have not hitherto heard, that the effects of the Tithe Commutation press heavily upon the Clergy. Doubtless we ought to give up much for the sake of peace. But it must not be forgotten, that we have surrendered a right, on which the very existence of the Establishment may depend: for it is indisputable, that if the course just legalized had been adopted at the Reformation, the Clergy would at this time have been without the means of subsistence. I pray God that my apprehensions on this score may not be realized.

III. §. 1. And now, after dwelling so long, and on so many points, on which a sense of duty has

obliged me to speak unfavourably, though I trust not more strongly than the circumstances of the times require, let me turn to more pleasing and encouraging topics—the state of religion and ministerial exertion in this Diocese.

[[b]At each successive Visitation, the answers which you have afforded to my enquiries, have given me the means of making a close review on all points connected with the religious statistics of the Diocese; and I am enabled with heartfelt gratitude to say, at each successive Visitation I find the result of increased exertion, and devotion to the interests of Religion, as well among the Laity as the Clergy.]

And I should do little justice to my own feelings, did I not seize this opportunity of bearing witness to, and expressing my deep sense of, the munificent liberality which has been shewn by various individuals in this Diocese with respect to the building and endowment of Churches. And if I enter into fewer particulars on this point than I should naturally be inclined to do, it is because I am aware, that the very feeling which has prompted such exertions, is one which shrinks from the publicity of praise: yet this I will say, that should any one assert that a spirit of indifference prevails amongst us, I can point out in one district only of this Diocese, as now constituted, no less than nine places of worship, which, during the last few years, have been raised and endowed by the generosity of individuals.

[b] For obvious reasons, this passage was omitted in Berkshire.

The same spirit is abroad among us with reference to the enlargement and repairs of Churches; and it is well that so it should be; for the places are few indeed in which I am unable to hear the cheering intelligence of increasing congregations, and additional services.

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto "Thy Name, be all honour and praise."

§. 2. I have spoken of increased exertions among us, and of an increasing sense of our Christian responsibilities; and therefore you will probably expect that I should say something of that peculiar developement of religious feeling in one part of the Diocese, of which so much has been said, and which has been *supposed* to *tend* immediately to a Revival of several of the Errors of Romanism. In point of fact, I have been continually (though anonymously) appealed to in my official capacity to check breaches both of doctrine and discipline, through the growth of Popery among us.

Now, as regards the latter point, breaches of discipline namely, on points connected with the public services of the Church, I really am unable, after diligent inquiry, to find any thing which can be so interpreted. I am given to understand, that an injudicious attempt was made in one instance, to adopt some forgotten portion of the ancient Clerical dress; but I believe it was speedily abandoned, and do not think it likely we shall hear of a repetition of this, or similar indiscretions.

At the same time, so much of what has been objected to, has arisen from minute attention to the Rubric; and I esteem uniformity so highly, (and uniformity never can be obtained without strict attention to the Rubric,) that I confess I would rather follow an antiquated custom (even were it so designated) *with* the Rubric, than be entangled in the modern confusions which ensue from the neglect of it.

With reference to errors *in doctrine*, which have been imputed to the series of publications called the *Tracts for the Times*, it can hardly be expected that, on an occasion like the present, I should enter into, or give a handle to any thing, which might hereafter tend to controversial discussions. Into controversy I will not enter. But, generally speaking, I may say, that in these days of lax and spurious liberality, any thing which tends to recall forgotten truths, is *valuable:* and where these publications have directed men's minds to such important subjects as the union, the discipline, and the authority of the Church, I think they have done good service: but there may be some points in which, perhaps, from ambiguity of expression, or similar causes, it is not impossible, but that evil rather than the intended good, may be produced on minds of a peculiar temperament. I have more fear of the Disciples than of the Teachers. In speaking therefore of the Authors of the Tracts in question, I would say, that I think their desire to restore the ancient

discipline of the Church most praiseworthy; I rejoice in their attempts to secure a stricter attention to the Rubrical directions in the Book of Common Prayer; and I heartily approve the spirit which would restore a due observance of the Fasts and Festivals of the Church: *but* I would implore them, by the purity of their intentions, to be cautious, both in their writings and actions, to take heed lest their good be evil spoken of; lest in their exertions to re-establish unity, they unhappily create fresh schism; lest in their admiration of antiquity, they revert to practices which heretofore have ended in superstition[1].

§. 3. And here let me repeat a wish, which I believe I have already expressed, that you should avail yourselves of that increase of devotional spirit, which is, I trust, gaining ground every where, to pay

[1] As I have been led to suppose that the above passage has been misunderstood, I take this opportunity of stating, that it never was my intention therein to pass any *general censure* on the Tracts for the Times. There must always be allowable points of difference in the opinions of good men, and it is only where such opinions are carried into extremes, or are mooted in a spirit which tends to schism, that the interference of those in authority in the Church is called for. The authors of the Tracts in question have laid no such painful necessity on me, nor have I to fear that they will ever do so. I have the best reasons for knowing, that they would be the first to submit themselves to that authority, which it has been their constant exertion to uphold and defend. And I feel sure, that they will receive my friendly suggestions in the spirit in which I have here offered them.

more attention than has of late years been bestowed on the Week-day Festivals. It is lamentable to think in how many parishes the observance of Ascension Day (a Festival no way inferior to that of Christmas) has fallen into neglect and desuetude. Lent, Passion Week, the Ember Days, and divers others of the seasons set apart by the Church for an especial measure of devotion, might be rendered far more available than, I fear, they are, for purposes of edification. In towns, and parishes where the population is concentrated round the church, we are really without excuse, if we fail of making the attempt; and even in those agricultural districts, where dwellings are more thinly scattered over the whole extent of the parish, I believe more may be done, than those who have never tried the experiment, would be apt to imagine: at least I know no reason why *our* labours should be less blessed, than those of our Dissenting Brethren.

§. 4. We are in fact called upon to use *every* exertion for the maintenance of the Church Services, and for the full and effectual support of the Church amongst us: and, if we are persuaded of this, surely we cannot look with indifference upon the lamentable want of spiritual aid and consolation, of which we, by daily experience, know the value, and of which, by God's appointment, we are the special dispensers, but of which, many a member of the Church in our colonies, is altogether deprived. I need scarcely say, that I am about to call your

attention to what may reasonably be expected from the *Church* in her missionary character; or from the *State*, either as encouraging emigration, or as resorting to penal settlements in her judicial policy.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts—the recognized organ of the Church for extending Christianity among our foreign settlements and dependencies—has, as you are well aware, suffered considerably in its means of usefulness, since our Government has thought it expedient to withdraw all the support and assistance, which, on every ground of wisdom, policy, and piety, had for many years been deservedly and justly granted to it.

I need not detain you to point out *how* PLAIN *the line of duty is*, of *those* who administer the affairs of a Christian Government, that they should provide for the eternal as well as the temporal interests of the people,—that when encouragement is given to the subjects of that Government to leave the land of their fathers, their Ministers and Churches, and to establish themselves in distant countries, care should be taken that they be not left without the means of grace; without the ministry of Christ's holy Word and Sacraments; without spiritual consolation to the sick, the dying, or the mourner; without a Minister, in short, to lead their common worship. But, if the Government refuse their aid to this good work, and decline this necessary duty, it remains that we, as Ministers

of the Church, take all the steps in *our* power effectually to stir up our congregations and others to accomplish such an object. And I know no better system, and certainly none more agreeable to our Ecclesiastical policy, than occasional collections in the several parishes throughout the Diocese.

I can bear witness to the probable success of such a plan, having, a few years ago, adopted it in two parishes of my own; where, after having explained to the parishioners the nature and objects of the Society, and asking them, not to become annual subscribers of a *stated* sum, (which might be a hardship,) but to give an occasional contribution (however small) when they felt they could afford it; I do not think a single year has since passed, in which I have not been able to remit to the Society a few pounds so collected.

§. 5. I will take this opportunity of saying, that for the future, in parishes where the population and extent of duty are really beyond the bodily powers of any one individual, I am ready to receive the appointment of *Assistant* Curate as a title: but it must be distinctly understood, that it is only under the circumstances specified that I shall think myself justified in doing so; and only then with the understanding, that no fresh nomination be made for two years; and that in all cases an adequate stipend will be given.

§. 6. I desire it should be generally known, that I require notice six months previous to the day of

Ordination from every Candidate for Holy Orders. Circumstances *may* occur, which will require from me *special* consideration; but as those who appear at my Ordinations are for the most part residents within the Diocese, they will not, I conceive, experience any difficulty in giving to me, through my Chaplain, the notice which I now require.

§. 7. The only remaining point, on which it is needful that I should express my wishes, is with reference to Confirmations. I will make it my business to consult your convenience as much as possible with regard to the places at which they shall be holden, and endeavour so to arrange matters, as that no parties may be brought from an inconvenient distance; at the same time you must be aware, that the great extension of this Diocese will make it far more difficult to suit the convenience of *all* at *all times*. I shall be obliged to you in all cases to supply my Chaplain with a *list* of the Catechumens from your several parishes, *as well as* to take care that the candidates themselves are supplied with tickets. I should not wish, as a general rule, to confirm any persons who have not *completed* their *fifteenth* year: but of course, I am quite ready to leave particular cases to the discretion of the Minister.

§. 8. I am sure it is not necessary to repeat my exhortations, that all possible pains should be taken in the instruction of the candidates; and that when confirmed, their spiritual condition should not be

lost sight of, and that they should be brought to an early participation of the Holy Communion.

The period between that in which young persons are withdrawn from our National Schools, and that in which they return to us as Candidates for Confirmation, is one in which, I fear, the seeds are too often sown of future depravity. The good that has been instilled early is forgotten, and the force of Christian principle is least opposed to temptation, at the period when temptation is strongest. Doubtless, my Reverend Brethren, you have seen and deplored this evil. I know but of one human means of meeting it, and that is, by keeping up the influence we have acquired over the mind of the child, through the *influence of adult schools*, or similar means of communication, until, the perilous days of youth being past, the good dispositions of the child are settled into the religious habits of the man.

IV. And now, having detained, and, I fear, wearied you so long, with temporal matters, with what word of spiritual exhortation shall I conclude?

The same thought with which I commenced this address to you, recurs to me with increasing solemnity at its close.

I feel that both to you and me exertion is more than ever needful, because the night cometh in which no man can work. It matters little how unquiet the earth may be; how prosperous or how

adverse, in respect of worldly circumstances, may be our condition as the Ministers of an Established Church. Time is flying rapidly, death fast approaching; the heat and burthen of the day will soon be past, the labourers will soon be called in to receive their wages, and then will arise the only really important question, Have we lived to Christ, and have we died in Him? have we worked in the harvest-field like faithful labourers, or have we slumbered in idleness through the long summer's day? Have we loved, and have we nurtured with holy nurture, the sheep which have been committed to our trust? Will it be their testimony against us, that they hungered, and we gave them no meat; were thirsty, and we gave them no drink; that our service was the service of hirelings?—or will they bear their glad and willing witness, that we took heed both to ourselves, " and " to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath " made us overseers, to feed the Church of God, " which He hath purchased with his own blood?"

I need not proclaim to men, whose lives are devoted to these things, and whose thoughts I am persuaded flow in that channel continually, what is requisite to constitute a faithful Minister of the Gospel, nor what the grounds are, on which (and on which only, with a view to our work standing in the day of trial) our exertions must be based.

In your individual capacity, unceasing prayer, self-examination, self-denial, a deep sense of the

responsibilities of the office committed to you, of your own weakness and manifold insufficiencies, with a continual looking for, and reliance on, the Holy Spirit; these—with a life of study, (not of books only, but of men,) and the habitual exercise of calm judgment, and sound discretion—must fit you for those *public* ministrations, in which a faithful preaching of the doctrines of the Cross, tender regard for the souls of men for whom Christ died, and untiring devotion in your sacred calling, will rarely fail, even in this world, of meeting their reward.

God, for his own wise purposes, has seen fit to cast our lot in a time of trial: *by* trial he hath ever purified his Church, and gathered in His Elect amid the raging of the storm. What may be in the distance before us, as we know nothing, we will anticipate nothing.

We are in the hands of One whose word is sure, and whose promises fail not; and He can make "the fierceness of man to praise Him," while He "helpeth all the meek upon earth."

For ourselves, my Reverend Brethren, as our line of duty is manifest, so is the reward of our work sure. It is required in stewards that a man be found *faithful;* and while we *continue* faithful, our ways shall be established.

Whatever happen, *we*, at least, may find cause for rejoicing. If the Church be destined for a time of peace, we shall pass the time of our sojourning

in gratitude, not unmixed with godly fear, lest security should lull us into indolence. If, on the other hand, the prospect be less cheering, I know not why we should not be content to wait with patience till our change come. To every one of us, the night is far spent, the day is at hand: why then should we shrink from an hour of trial? "*God's* "will, not *mine*, be done!" is the one unvarying answer of the faithful soldier of the Cross: and such, my Brethren, I trust are we!

We know *whose* we are, and *whom* we serve; therefore to Him, in simple faith, we commit ourselves, and His Church's cause.

On leaving that Church, He bequeathed her a legacy of "*sorrow*," but it was sorrow in the presence of an abiding Comforter; sorrow, which was destined to be "turned into *joy*;" sorrow, with the all-sufficient alleviation attached to it: "In the "*world* ye shall have *tribulation;* but be of good "cheer, I have overcome the world." "Ye *now* "have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your "heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh "from you."

THE END.

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